SPAIN

Tuesday, September 24, 1968 - Arrived 8:40

Sleep
Tuesday PM
Cocktails at Cuevas or Cavas (spelled both ways in Madrid)
Dinner in old section of Madrid near Plaza Mayor; Flamenco in old section
Visited old church - very dark, ornate and with a virgin to everything, including one dressed in black and silver.

Wednesday

Walked around Hilton area - passed U. S. Embassy
Visited Church of Sacrado Corazon
Pink & white
Romanesque
Sherry in the Castellani Hilton

PM - El-Escorial
Valle de los
Cardos
Dinner at El Fogon
Brandy & cointreau at the St. Andrews Pub with the "beautiful people"
All the time in Madrid traffic; and diesel fumes unbelievable - sometimes it looks like a heavy fog and always incredibly noisy.

Thursday

Off for Ibizia - and arrived at noon - long taxi drive to S'argamasso Hotel - strange place here - would classify it as an international resort - but of modest standards - it's very crowded, although it closes October 30th. I think we are the only Americans here.
We came here for $3\frac{1}{2}$ days of rest and relaxation and that is what we are going to get.
We are "locked in" so to speak - with meals and no transportation - and all at 980 P per diem - all inclusive for 2 @ $.0167 per PSTA.
It's wine at all meals and brandy or sherry or cervesa for cocktails if you chose - but no one seems to drink our type of cocktails.
Everyone sunning all the time - or so it seems - reminds me of pictures I've seen of European health spas - people soaking it all up --------.
Germans in profusion, French, English, Spanish - all guests here.

Friday

AM - sunning and swimming
PM - went to the town of Santa Eulalia - starting at the eglesia at the top of the "puig".
Very romantic, picturesque place - the town seems to spill down from the "puig" or top.
The eglesia is also the old fortress - heavy stone walls - no windows except at top - all white stucco - very high ceiling - fairly small church and a million miles from nowhere - in what certainly used to be a poor area, and still is - and the magnificent alter would do justice to St. Peters in Rome.
Well - so on down the hill - views, stone walls - white - white - white - narrow alleys, urine smells, old houses, new houses, well kept houses, falling down houses - and then into town for shopping and sidewalk cafe people watching - everyone looks everyone else up and down - disconcerting at first, but it gets enjoyable.
Quite a bit of Ibizian craft - to our surprise - olive wood work, - embroidery - absolutely beautiful, and not expensive.
Gin and tonic at the sidewalk cafe - people everywhere - mostly tourists, escapees and expatriates - once in awhile an implacable old native lady or man sailing slowly through.
What do they think of all this "progress"? Hippie, artist, native walker and visitor - cars and motor bikes speeding past making all the worst possible noise, and the babble of voices, which after awhile you don't listen to, because you don't understand anything that is said.

Saturday

Decided to hike to Playa es Canas - some 3 KM from here - by road. We wandered into the back country and found a gold mine of farm country.
First off - the earth is so red - sort of travertine red - olive groves, figs, some kind of cultivated locust, goats, chickens, stone walls, stone walls, stone walls, again - prosperous looking farm houses and very unprosperous houses. Also, they grow peppers, cabbages, beans here.
At the end of our long walk in the back country, we arrived at the Playa. Well!
A cluster of all kinds of Pensions (hotels) of all sorts and a long stretch of curving beach - filled with beach chairs and umbrellas - canvas and straw parasol type covers - PLUS a half dozen eateries.

Saturday (Cont'd.)

We paid 40 PSTA for 2 chairs - went swimming - had a wild native lunch right on the beach with plenty of flies and a bottle of "reserva especial" a dry light grape flavored wine - we drank 3/4 although I ordered only ½.
Walked back the beach way and found we were less than ¼ mile from our own place.

Sunday

Spent a day of rest at S'argamassa - swim - sun - rest.

Monday

Arrived in Madrid - stay at Palace - what a marvelous "Grand Hotel" - right out of the beginning of the 20th century - or rather the end of the 19th.
We went to lunch at the Ritz -- out in the garden - very delightful - expensive - and need not be repeated.
Before and after - we were at and in the Prado - Rubens - Greco, Goya, Tinzio, Murillo, Tintoretto, and Velasquez - by the wall-full, plus Zuraban and a Rembrandt to complete the job - anyway the Prado is like a rat's maze - and goes on and on and on - plus let's don't forget those remarkable table tops of inlaid stone and the one with four lions in toto holding up the table - each one with a foot on a huge marble ball. So----a drink and dinner at the Palace and not very spectacular, but excellent food - after which we went to Zambra (Zambra is a very way of life) an Escuela of Dance - for the presentation of Flamenco - our previous experience fades away - for this is very, very beautiful and wonderful. The atmosphere at the club or whatever, was one of seriousness and not fun, however - but we shall probably never see better.

Tuesday

Took a cab to the Royal Palace, and who should be there but the Caudillo himself - celebrating the 32nd anniversary of his regime on October 1st - many spectators in front of palace - across street guard of honor outside - plus mounted guards in great white capes, red tunics, sparkling silver helmets - quite a sight.

Tuesday (Cont'd.)

We saw the JEFE finally drive out the main entrance in his Rolls Royce - the other dignitaries were in cadillacs and dozens of other official cars - military, church and diplomatic - ribbons, sashes, medals, and more kinds of uniforms - only saw them in cars as the whole ceremony, whatever it was - was in the Palace Square - behind gates. Otherwise, the palace was a colossal pile of granite - surrounded by very lovely gardens - and the square itself, after it was opened again to the public was a lovely one of huge proportions - Palace on one end and Cathedral on other.
After this we walked down to "Old Madrid" again - but found it was all too much and we went back to the hotel for a siesta - after which we went to Retiro Park and saw another colossal monument at the banks of an estuary which was very big and full of all kinds of people in all kinds of boats - we sat down for a sherry and cake to watch it all.

Wednesday

In Segovia, ancient capital of Castile - old town - "real old Spain here" - narrow streets, buildings piled on top of one another - stucco, grille work, tile roofs and all - doors and gates - someday I'll take a trip to Spain to photograph doors and iron gates. They are beautiful, heavy, huge, grilled, carved, pointed, bare, stained, rusted, curved, good, bad, but overwhelming present.
Visited the Alcazar - very, very lovely - citadel on a small mountain peak - with the town on the east and great enormous rolling plains in every other direction - beautiful sunny day - there seems to be no atmosphere which protects you from the sun - as in other parts of the world - the whole view is golden, mellow, dusty and dry and beautiful - somehow.
We sit on the plaza at end of day, 7:00 PM - for brandy & soda for me & sherry for Nellie - and the world chatters and wars around us.
We are staying at a delightful hotel called the Gran Hotel Sirenas which didn't seem to please the concerj at the Palace - but does please us. I think we shall eat dinner there.

Thursday

Left Segovia after circling the city to get a long range view of the Alcazar. It is almost impossible to find your way around in these cities and in the surrounding barrios - we ended up in so many dead ends - it is beyond belief.
So we hurried on southward from Segovia saying a new good-bye at the top of each hill - the hilly plains kept rolling under our wheels, but we could see Segovia rising above them far - far out - a thrilling sight. Stopped in Avila and had a sherry and goodies for lunch in the Plaza and then headed for Toledo. Beautiful country-side - everywhere sun all silvery and brilliant - not golden - but silver. Found a place in Toledo on top of a hill - great big place - dozens of tables all set - but only 20 rooms in the whole place, and I would say about half full. Beautiful view of Toledo, which is what we came for anyway. Dashed back into the wild town to do two hours of shopping for Toledo jewelry.

Friday

Left Toledo with a quick drive to town - no time to see it - gets very frustrating - so we head for Cordoba - arrive at 6 - tired - stay at a Parador, a little on the Spanish Howard Johnson kind of service - but had a wonderful swim there - decided not to try to see any of Cordoba but get to Seville and rest up a bit.

Saturday

Out again - across beautiful country - Cordoba faded in the distance, and it never felt our presence. Headed for Seville - a new world opened up - they grow cotton in Spain - hundreds and hundreds of acres. On the far horizon as we went across the plain rose a kind of mountain peak - the nearer we got we began to realize there was a castle on top - first it looked like a mirage - then it was real - then it looked like a deserted ruin - then it became perfect. Then we drove through another one of those hillside towns - sparkling white, clean as a whistle and on up and up till we were at the foot of the mesa. So we parked and walked up - up - to the walls of the castle. It was deserted but in good exterior condition, and we walked around taking pictures. Suddenly a man's voice from the heights hollered down indicating in Spanish that he would let us in. Well, what a dream world. Not in good condition but not bad. The man took us everywhere. A 12th century castle - ruined and all furniture destroyed during the Spanish civil war by the Republicans - rode their horses through the castle - the usual sign of scorn by the military.

Saturday (Cont'd.)

The man who called to us - the caretaker, took us from top to bottom. The owner now lives in Madrid.
Then on to Sevilla, and we had planned to stay at the Hotel Madrid but found it was torn down, so we went to the Ingleterre which was listed as lst class, but full - they recommended The Alfonso XIII, which is part of the Ritz chain - so here we are again in the lap of fin de ciecle luxury - but it is more opulent here than the Palace ever was. They brought all the motifs of Spain together - threw them up in the air - and when they landed called the pile The Alfonso XIII. After a brandy and soda in the Grand Lounge, we went out on the town - this time - "Old Seville" which is called Santa Cruz - narrow streets, cobbles - hanging flowers off balconies - again with its own feeling - narrower streets, more iron work. And after dinner more Flamenco - but this was the 3rd best of what we had seen so far - really not very good, but fun.

Sunday

After breakfast we went to the Cathedral - - one of the largest in the world - well, after all this "seeing" - the effect of the Cathedral was one of non comprehension - it's so big, so ornate, so overdone in everyway. Glass vaults of vestments so utterly encrusted with metallic embroideries they could stand up by themselves; enormous reliquaries, gold, silver, jewels, etc. Mass books on stands fully six feet wide - heavy gold, fluted, curled - oppressive ecclesiasticism, and the Cathedral so monumentally big - the Mass was being said at the Main Alter, but you couldn't see the priest for all the ornamentation between the congregation and him.
And so to the BULLFIGHT - romantic, fabled, golden in the sun - ole & ole; picadors, banderillos and novilladas (pre matadors), excitement and some indication of the mystique of the Spaniard - of the Spanish male at least. But BLOOD ---- throbbing - spouting - running down all over the bull. Six fights in two hours - Flamenco and Bullfighting - all Spain!
And once more to dinner - at a restaurant down at the river bend - very picturesque.

Monday

A visit to The Alcazar - Moorish, beautiful - our first all Moorish palace - I expect younger than the one at Segovia and much more decorated - tile work; floor, courtyard, ceiling - all beautifully decorated and coordinated.

Monday (Cont'd.)

In the heart of a busy city it is as cool and peaceful as a monastery in the mountains. The Moors seemed to know how to bring peace and beauty to the soul.
Then one more visit to the vast Cathedral, and this time with no Sunday traffic it was even more vast, and in its vastness it was even more unbelievable than yesterday.
Then off to Ronda - and we followed the road markers for Cadiz - for a long while. Stopped at the plaza in Jerez de la Fontera for lunch - this is the sherry making country of the world - and sherry takes its name from the town and not the other way 'round.
Out again, and we start up into the mountains towards Ronda. Arrive about 6:00 at Hotel Victoria which is a nice type hostelry atop a long steep tajo --- and the view out across several valleys is out of this world. We are high, high up ---- the sun sets in different valleys one at a time, and we see it all from our balcony until the sun sets on us.

Tuesday

Downtown fell upon a group who were touring, and we walked into the bull ring with them - found that the ring itself was an old Roman Circus - built by the Romans, and it is now the bull ring with additions. Bullfighting was brought over by the Moors, was fought on horseback and in olden times - usually horse, man an bull were all killed. It was the sport of the noblemen - and in the reign of Carlos V - the Pope asked him to outlaw bullfighting - he, himself, being a great bullfighter. He agreed to the Pope's request because all of Spain's nobility was being killed off. Bullfighting was, therefore, put away for over 200 years, and not renewed until 1805, and then by a commoner who fought a bull in the ring here in Ronda - he is the local hero. Bullfighting is pretty much the same now as at the renewal date. But up until 1921, the horse of the picador was not protected as he is now, and the record for one bullfight is 26 horses killed under the picador. Then down into the really old part of town - very picturesque with a big new stone bridge (very old) followed by a Roman stone bridge, followed by an Arab stone bridge, little narrow paths all cobbled pitching down an enormous gorge at a pretty sharp angle. Ronda is a little dirty and smelly, but it is certainly picturesque.

Wednesday

We spent the day on bridges - the new one - about 5 to 600 years old - and had a sherry under the road and above the main arch. We saw the Roman bridge and the Arabe bridge - long, narrow, very steep cobbled walkways combining steps and inclines. In the afternoon we found our way out of town down below the walls and down into the gorge. Beautiful countryside, bathed in sunlight, drenched in sunlight, drowning in sunlight, hot, strong, brilliant, cutting, wild, and warm sunlight. It's all kind of like a bitter sweet sauce - hot sun and cool air. We're freshed once again and decide to leave for Granada in the morning.

Thursday

Head out for Granada, and it's like leaving Segovia - the town keeps disappearing and reappearing again and we keep turning back for a final view. After 3/4 hour we decide we are on the wrong road again, and so we are, and we're heading for Malaga - where "Malaga grapes are very good grapes, but the grapes from Smyrna are better." At least we could see the Costa del Sol - which was okey - very much built up and as much like Spain as Asbury Park - so perhaps it was okey to find that out. We had lunch in Malaga - on the roof of some crazy little restaurant in one of the parks. We saw the docks nearby and walked over after lunch. There was a huge 3 masted sailing ship - the A.R.S. LIBERTAD - I asked a sailor was it a Spanish ship - he said No - Argentine! We figured it was some kind of a school ship or training ship. And so after another long day on the road we arrive at another Palace - this time the Alhambra Palace. After a freshening up, we have a drink on the long balcony which hangs over the city. Man! - for views, Spain certainly has it! Nellie felt mad - so with the help of our waiter we went to see some gypsy dancing at a "native spot." The Club was called Neptune - and what does one think gypsy dancing is - it's Flamenco - remember Flamenco? This is our fourth experience and here it is very, very good, but they are a little stingy with the servings. The "Native Spot" caters to Touristicos and they arrive and leave by the bus full. But the dancing is good.

Friday

The Alhambra - quite beyond words - very beautiful - we wandered around for about $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours - neither one having much to say.

Friday (Cont'd.)

It was peaceful, beautiful, cool, aesthetic, picturesque, lovely, and again, views all over the place - gardens like you never thought existed, except in the most expansive imagination - we'll spend some more time here tomorrow. It's sort of a fairyland. In the PM we visited a "fabrica" where they weave all kinds of very beautiful things by hand from pillow covers to rugs. Our bedroom rugs look like rugs woven here.

Saturday

Finished our tour of the Alhambra - the Sultan's gardens - called "Generallife." - that's Spanish and not insurance. This building is sort of a palatial pergola - running all over a hillside - as far as I could see built only for many views of the gardens which cascaded down over the hillside on terraces - little gardens and big gardens - some hedged in by tall cedars, some contained only by low boxwoods or stone or brick walls. Beautifully designed stone walks - short and long sets of stairs - one long set of stairs had four plateaus each with a fountain on it - and where one might find handrails, there were ducts for water running down either side of the stairs around the wall of each plateau - and so on down the next flight. Well, we'll have to leave it that the Jardins de Generallife beggar description. After lunch we took the 2-car diesel train to Madrid - 2nd class. The ride was long - 7½ hours and would have been quite a bore if we had not made friends with a young Spanish family of four. We had fun trading languages, particularly in making up games with the children.

Sunday

"To the Palace, please driver" - and that does not mean the hotel, it means the Palacio Real. This time it was open - and here again one's eyes but pop. Totally magnificent, plus ostentation and sumptuousness. Chandeliers, of crystal and bronze, walls of velvet damask, embroidery, porcelain - room after room - each sovereign vying for supremacy with "his" or "her" room, trying to outdo the previous generation or probably some other contemporary ruler - all completely furnished and just as it was when Alfonso XIII drove away quietly in 1931.

Sunday (Cont'd.)

The state dining room table seats 150 persons for an intimate Sunday night supper. A 20th century fully furnished Royal Palace is something to see. In the PM we went to the Rastro or thieves market, which again was a "sight" - thousands of people - really thousands in a stretch of avenida at least ¼ mile long shopping from hundreds of shops lined up and down - (double parked - so-to-speak) on either side of the broad street. I mean everyone was crammed into this thoroughfare. Come 2:30 PM or 14.30 as the Spanish keep time - the place closed up. Later we went to our second bullfight - this time the foe of the bull is on horseback. This was the Madrid Plaza de Toros, the biggest in Spain. I would say it was almost full. We had dinner in an underground cave by the Plaza Mayor and went once again to Flamenco - our very last fling.